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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 15 for State Army and Air Departments from

SUMMARY

A Pastoral Letter from Msgr. Mariano Rossell Arellano, Archbishop of Guatemala, calling for a National Crusade against Communism in the country was the outstanding development of the past few days, before Holy Week promised to bring national life to its usual virtual standstill. The Archbishop's Letter, his strongest anti-Communist pronouncement to date, put the Church squarely in the Opposition, and the Communists quickly complained that the Archbishop was meddling in politics.

A new strain was put on the shaky Nicaraguan-Guatemalan relations as a result of a report that Nicaragua would refuse to give safe-conducts to five persons allegedly implicated in the attempt to murder President Somoza who had taken refuge in the Guatemalan Embassy in Managua. The Acting Foreign Minister said publicly that the country granting asylum had the sole right to determine whether a person seeking asylum was a political refugee or a common criminal. The press, meanwhile, was unanimous in criticism of General Somoza for the repressive measures he had taken.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Archbishop Calls for Crusade Against Communism in Guatemala: In a Pastoral Letter issued on April 4 to be read from pulpits during Holy Week, Msgr. Mariano Rossell Arellano, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Guatemala, called for a "National Crusade" against Communism and in effect authorized Roman Catholics to use in this struggle "all means" compatible with their condition as free men and sons of God. Departing from his previous caution about commenting on domestic politics, Msgr. Rossell Arellano charged that a "rabble" of foreign adventurers with Communist training had been given facilities to undermine the security of the nation; that Communists had divided labor; that the official radio broadcast anti-Church propaganda; that newsstands were flooded with Communist

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literature; and that even schools were being used to spread Communist doctrine. He especially urged that the Roman Catholic social doctrines be observed.

The significance of the Archbishop's pronouncement was that it more clearly than ever before put the Church with the Opposition to the Arbenz Administration by giving moral sanction to those opposing Communist influences in that Administration. The Church has no organizational weapon to carry its new Crusade into effect, but the Archbishop's stand will doubtless give encouragement to opposition groups. The Communists, quick to realize this, were the only ones to comment publicly. Writing in Tribuna Popular, Alfredo GUERRA Borges, the party's propaganda chief, said, "It is lamentable, really lamentable, that the Archbishop of Guatemala...puts his prestige and preeminence in the hands of the conspirators."

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Guatemala Critical of Nicaraguan Government: The Guatemalan press was unanimously critical of the repressive measures taken by General Somoza and the Nicaraguan Government following the recent attempt on Somoza's life, and a potentially explosive issue arose in Guatemalan-Nicaraguan relations when the press reported that Nicaragua would not give safe conduct to five alleged conspirators who had taken refuge in the Guatemalan Embassy in Managua: Norwin ROSELLO, Francisco IBARRA Mayorga, Guillermo CUADRA Rivas, Ismena de DUARTE, and Otto DUARTE. Fearing another "Haya de la Torre Case," the Guatemalan Government sent Major Humberto [illegible]ROZ Gálvez, Chief of Protocol, to Managua to attempt to arrange the matter with the Nicaraguan Government, and Ramón C[illegible]VIA, Acting Foreign Minister while Toriello is on leave, made a public statement maintaining that it was the right of the Guatemalan Embassy and not the Nicaraguan Government to decide whether the persons seeking refuge were political refugees or common criminals.

With attention focused on these aspects of Nicaraguan developments, there was no public comment concerning any connection between the anti-Somoza plot and Guatemala. Some private sources, however, noted that several of the conspirators were former Caribbean Legionnaires who had lived here and had the confidence of the Guatemalan Government.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Communists Use Names Without Permission to Give Youth Festival Non-Partisan Aura: In an evident effort to spread abroad the impression that the scheduled "Festival of Youth and Friendship of Central America and the Caribbean" is of a non-partisan character (Weeka 14), the Communist Tribuna [illegible]

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of April 8 published a long list including several prominent non-Communist names of persons allegedly elected to committees in charge of various Festival activities. However, it soon became apparent that once again the Communist organizers of the Festival were resorting to the tactic of using names without permission for two of the non-Communists have already published statements that they have nothing to do with the Festival and a third is known to have said the same thing privately. One of those who publicly denied any connection with the Festival was Angel RAMIREZ M., President of the Guatemalan Press Association (APG).

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

William L. Krieg
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